CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND TWENTY-EIGHTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 7 March 1996, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Ramaker (Netherlands)

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The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 728th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I have on my list of speakers the representatives of Kenya, Cuba, the Russian Federation and Brazil. However, before listening to the speakers inscribed today, allow me, on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, to extend a cordial welcome to those representatives of non-governmental organizations who are present in the public gallery today. As you are aware, International Women's Day will be celebrated tomorrow, 8 March, and to mark that occasion, the NGO community will address a message to the Conference. I am sure that the Conference joins me in extending our very best wishes to all the women present in the room today in saying how much we appreciate their constant commitment to peace and disarmament and their continued interest in our endeavours.

I should now like to give the floor to the Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, who will read out their message to the Conference.

Mr. PETROVSKY (Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations): The message reads as follows:

"Esteemed members of the Conference on Disarmament:

"We, women from different countries and organizations, are gathered in Geneva at the annual seminar for International Women's Day. We are honoured to address you again in 1996, the year that will be remembered, hopefully, for the successful completion of the comprehensive test-ban treaty. After 42 years of campaigning for the CTBT, we are encouraged by the progress you are making in finalizing this treaty. We urge you to do your utmost to fulfil the expectations of the women and men of the world who have clearly demonstrated that nuclear testing is not acceptable. A zero-yield test ban is the first step towards eradicating these atrocious weapons. We trust this treaty will be a true comprehensive test ban. To allow for any kind of nuclear explosion would undermine the credibility of the whole treaty. As chemical and biological weapons are prohibited, so must nuclear weapons be prohibited.

"The focus of this year's seminar is the issue of conversion, which we consider to be an essential, practical component for effective disarmament. The Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing 1995 states that Governments must act to convert military resources and related industries to development and peaceful purposes. In this the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, we are called to work to reclaim society's investment into the military in order to move from a costly culture of war to an equitable culture of peace. Conversion is about moving away from military priorities without creating unemployment and toxic or unusable land.

(Mr. Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations)

"Conversion is not only about the conversion of military spending and military industry to civilian use, it is also about employment, social justice and environmental restoration. A comprehensive strategy for peace and disarmament involves promoting industrial and political shifts, which are the necessary preconditions for transforming present military priorities. The move towards real security could be realized by committing to an actual peace dividend.

"Although the excesses of bipolar military confrontation are in the past, they leave behind a massive array of weapons, postures and attitudes, many of them searching for new threats to justify extension of their roles at a time of declining defence budgets. However, as changes are made to political structures, industries and attitudes, an opportunity exists to reallocate significant resources to other productive activities. We should now decide to change the culture of violence that is enshrined by vast amounts of weaponry. This challenge is the inspiration for conversion strategies.

"Political systems tend to support planning which shows a social or economic return on political investment within 5 to 10 years at the most - 1 to 2 is often preferred. However, like any good business venture, conversion will require significant investment over a long period of time, but not as long as it took to institute a permanent war industry. Conversion programmes to reallocate finances, reorient research and development, restructure industry, reintegrate personnel, find alternative uses for military bases and installations and dismantle, reuse or scrap surplus weapons are all projects that require planning and deserve generous funding. Mechanisms are available to Governments to encourage such developments, including direct subsidies as well as incentives for industries to conduct basic research, improve technology transfer, support job training and education and environmental regulations. Inga Thorsson, once a delegate to the CD, concluded that for every job that vanishes in the military sector, two can appear in the civilian sector. Her study showed that with careful planning and adequate investment, the traditional arguments against conversion are not substantiated. All that is required is the political will to make a long-term investment for a peaceful future.

"In our seminar we have heard about concrete examples of conversion undertaken by a coalition of once defence-dependent councils throughout Europe, successfully converting their economies and environments. Network Demilitarised, a project funded by the European Union, recognizes that planning and community consultation are essential for the smooth conversion of military bases throughout Europe. Conversion in countries in transition has been a major focus of our seminar. It has been explained that an important condition for ensuring conversion strategies is multilateral cooperation and support, because the economic and social costs of conversion are very difficult to sustain without financial support. We have also learnt that conversion in war-torn societies is an essential part of demobilization and building a long-term peace. The

(Mr. Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations)

demobilization programme in Mozambique is an example of where, like any good venture, significant investment pays. Combatants were offered an 18-month pay-out package which gave them the security to retrain and begin a new life out of the military. The positive response to this programme was overwhelming, illustrating that assistance and incentives are required for those who have undergone prolonged warfare and perhaps know few other skills.

"Disarmament has major social and economic effects, involving both costs and benefits. Global military spending is still an inappropriate and unacceptable drain on the world's resources and a danger to peace. Military expenditure in the world today is estimated to be in the region of US$ 1 trillion. Just one quarter of that sum can provide clean water for all, cancel the debt of developing nations, provide shelter for all, provide health care for all, prevent global warming, stabilize the world's population, stop ozone depletion, eliminate starvation and malnutrition, eliminate illiteracy, prevent soil erosion and provide clean, safe energy.

"A coherent and responsible policy on global disarmament is not being pursued when aggression and the arms trade continue to be encouraged. The supply of arms to nations in situations of tension or potential tension only exacerbates feelings of mistrust between nations, thereby providing a fertile environment for the proliferation of nuclear and other weapons. It is not feasible to aim for nuclear arms control and disarmament when a conventional arms race is encouraged.

"The ongoing disarmament work done by NGOs on issues such as land-mines and nuclear testing can only complement the CD's ongoing work on disarmament. To this end, we would urge the Conference on Disarmament to consider enlarging the role of NGOs in the work of the CD. Our work represents the voices of many women around the world who are active at local and national levels working to strengthen awareness and action on disarmament matters.

"We need to envision a world that has evolved from settling conflicts by warfare. As the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, the CD is a forum where changed international circumstances can really bear the fruit of disarmament. This year's International Women's Day seminar encourages you in your urgently relevant work for disarmament and peace."

The message is signed by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, the Women's World Summit Foundation, Geneva, Zonta International, Women for Peace, France, Women for Peace, Switzerland, the World Federation of Methodist Women, Switzerland Physicians for Social Responsibility, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, the International Council of Jewish Women, the International Peace Bureau - War Resisters' International, the Quaker United Nations Office, the International Baccalaureat Organization and the Inter-African Committee.

(Mr. Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations)

Mr. President, could I join you in extending my very best wishes to all women present here in this room today?

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for having read out the message of the NGO community on the occasion of International Women's Day. Before giving the floor to the speakers inscribed today, I should like to ask whether any delegation wishes to take the floor at this stage in connection with the message we have just heard. The distinguished Ambassador of Belgium, Baron Guillaume, has the floor.

Baron GUILLAUME (Belgium) (translated from French): Mr. President, allow me on behalf of my country, and as representative of the Western Group, to thank the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom for showing their interest in the Conference on Disarmament by coming once again this year to deliver a message to us on the occasion of International Women's Day. We are particularly appreciative as negotiators of disarmament treaties, because we know that whereas wars are almost always caused by men, the vast majority of victims are women and children. It is with this in mind that we are now working hard to negotiate the CTBT, and that we have resolved to complete our work in this field next June. If we manage to meet that deadline, we will be able to be proud to have contributed to responding to one of the major concerns of women throughout the world. To achieve this we need the encouragement of one and all and the support which we find through the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom is welcome.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Belgium, Ambassador Guillaume, for his statement, and I now give the floor to the representative of Hungary, Mr. Zimonyi.

Mr. ZIMONYI (Hungary): The Hungarian delegation has the honour to welcome, on behalf of the Eastern European regional group in the Conference on Disarmament, the message from non-governmental organizations. We thank them for their interest and support they have given to our work. We have noted with special interest the points made about the ongoing efforts in this body to conclude a comprehensive test-ban treaty. On behalf of the Eastern European Group, the Hungarian delegation would like to convey to the representatives of the Women's international organizations, as well as all women heads and members of delegations, secretariat staff and interpreters, our heartfelt congratulations on the eve of International Women's Day.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Hungary for his statement, and I now give the floor to the representative of Algeria, Ambassador Meghlaoui.

Mr. MEGHLAOUI (Algeria) (translated from French): On behalf of my country, Algeria, and the Group of 21, which I have the honour of coordinating, I wish first of all, through you, Mr. President, to welcome the representatives of the NGO community who are here with us today on the eve of International Women's Day. I warmly welcome the message that has been

delivered to us on this occasion, a message of peace and an appeal to contribute to bringing about an ever more peaceful and safer world. Through this message hopes and fears are expressed. We must make every effort to fulfil these hopes and dispel the fears. We can do this, first, by finalizing the CTBT this year, next by structuring our agenda for balanced and rational treatment of our future work, and lastly, more generally, by harnessing our work to an irreversible multilateral disarmament process which seems to be possible as a result of the present configuration of international relations.

Mr. President, ladies, I would also like to assure you, on behalf of the Group of 21, of our unshakeable attachment to all efforts aimed at general and complete disarmament. The necessary political will exists in the Group of 21 and in each delegation which identifies itself fully with the appeal addressed to us today by the NGOs. The commitment of these NGOs to the cause of peace, their determination, set an example for us all. I am convinced that this year another step will be taken towards peace. Others must follow so that human and intellectual resources are finally harnessed to development. I will conclude by wishing every success to the NGOs which have addressed this message to us today, and extending greetings to all our sisters in this room.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Meghlaoui of Algeria for his statement and now give the floor to the representative of China, Ambassador Sha.

Mr. SHA (China) (translated from Chinese): On the eve of International Women's Day, I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Chinese delegation to express warm congratulations to all the women participating in the CD, including the ladies present in our gallery today and in the interpretation booths. A Chinese saying goes "Women can hold up half the sky". We are glad to see that, although the number of women participating in the CD is less than half of the people in the forum, yet they have already been playing the role of holding up half the sky in the negotiations. And sometimes and on some issues they even play a larger role than holding up half the sky. Last year, the Fourth International Women's Conference was successfully held in China. The Conference adopted the Beijing Declaration. It made an important contribution towards the advancement of the role and the position of women, including in the field of disarmament. We hope that the ladies working in the CD will, as always, cooperate with the menfolk here so as to jointly promote the noble cause of international disarmament.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Ambassador of China for his statement. Is there any other delegation wishing to take the floor? If that is not the case, I now give the floor to the representative of Kenya, Ambassador Esther Tolle.

Ms. Tolle (Kenya): First of all, let me convey my delegation's congratulations and sincere gratitude for the very impressive message of commitment that has been conveyed to us by the International Women's Federation and which was read out by the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. President, as this is the first time that I intervene in the plenary of the Conference on Disarmament, allow me to extend my delegation's sincere

congratulations for the skilful manner in which you have steered our work in the past weeks in your dual role as President of the Conference and Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban. I would also like to extend my delegation's appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador U Aye of Myanmar, for the effective manner in which he guided our work, thereby enabling the smooth commencement of our 1996 session, and also to Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and personal representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and his deputy, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, for the invaluable services they render to the Conference. Allow me also to thank all my colleagues who have welcomed me to the Conference on Disarmament. I have been closely following the work of the CD and look forward to working closely with other colleagues to achieve the aims of this august body.

The Conference on Disarmament has reached a critical phase in its work in the quest for the conclusion of the comprehensive test-ban treaty. The past two years have resulted in commendable progress. As we approach the final hurdle, the task ahead of us is indeed challenging. Mindful of United Nations General Assembly resolution 50/65, that was adopted unanimously at the General Assembly's last session, which called for completion of the final text as soon as possible within this year, it is imperative that the Conference strives diligently in order to arrive at a consensus on all outstanding issues. To this end, I wish to assure you and Ambassadors Berdennikov and Zahran, Chairmen of Working Groups 1 and 2 respectively, of my delegation's continued support.

My delegation is appreciative of the effort and dedication of the delegations of Iran and Australia who presented treaty texts which I am confident will prove to be useful for the negotiating process. Both texts are currently under consideration by my delegation. The time is propitious for increased momentum and exercise of political will to ensure that a truly comprehensive test ban be attained within the deadline.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Kenya for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Cuba, Ambassador Caballero.

Mr. CABALLERO (Cuba) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, as I am addressing the plenary of the Conference on Disarmament officially for the first time, allow me to express my congratulations to you at seeing you in the Chair of what in my view as a newcomer is a forum of great prestige on account of the responsible way in which it deals with the tasks entrusted to it as the sole multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament. I am sure that this Conference will benefit a great deal from your experience and your recognized skill as a diplomat. You may count on the reliable support of my delegation. Allow me also to pay tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Aye of Myanmar, who excelled in discharging his functions. I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to all those who very kindly extended a welcome to me.

In my country, 8 March is celebrated as a popular holiday. On that day our entire people pays tribute to mothers, wives, daughters, women workers,

for their enormous contribution to political, economic and social life and the efforts of our people. My delegation wishes to take the opportunity offered by a day like today, on the eve of that holiday, to express in addition its congratulations to the women colleagues who honourably represent their countries in this Conference, as well as to the women representatives of the NGOs who are with us today, and to all the female conference servicing staff.

For those present and in general for those who follow the evolution of the work in the Conference on Disarmament, there is the conviction that we are at a crucial moment of definitions, not only of principles and specific concepts related to the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty that we are negotiating, but also of what our aspirations are as an international community, this being understood as the concatenation of the interests of all the States that make it up. Such a concatenation and interaction presupposes that the views of some will not preponderate over the views of others, but that there should be a harmonious reflection of the essence of the respective national interests. To realize these aspirations, the decisive factor is the flexibility that we demonstrate in carrying out the tasks entrusted to us and the recognition that this is the very time and place for each of us, in a sovereign manner, to be capable of identifying the common ground on which we will find a solution to our differences. This is the spirit that should prevail in our work if we truly wish to take another step towards disarmament.

Of course, the foregoing has a great deal to do with perceptions concerning what is best for each country and for the international community as a whole. That which for some might perhaps constitute an extraordinary contribution, for others who maintain different military and security doctrines, different ideas of what disarmament is per se, might be one more step of limited practical significance. We should have a clear awareness that each State, regardless of its military doctrine, size, political or economic system or approach to disarmament, has national interests and the right to defend them on an equal footing in any negotiations that are held.

The comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, a matter which has been before us for some time, will contain such principles of international law, in so far as it is a universal and multilateral instrument that can be effectively verified; contributes effectively to preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects; to the process of nuclear disarmament and, consequently, to the fostering of international peace and security. If this, the mandate that was given to us some time ago, is not faithfully carried out, it cannot be considered that we are being consistent with the flexibility and spirit of compromise that we are advocating. How can we carry out this mandate? How can we have a homogeneous interpretation of what it means? In our view, very simply: by laying down clearly that the CTBT should constitute a step in the process towards nuclear disarmament. This step would be followed by concrete measures to proceed, in a given time-frame, to the attainment of the nuclear-weapon-free world which we once lived in.

Listening carefully to the various statements that are made in plenary, it would appear at times that there is agreement with regard to the objective that should be pursued by this treaty, in the sense that it is said that it

should be a "comprehensive test-ban treaty". The word "comprehensive" means total and total is, in this case, a complete halt to nuclear tests by all States, in all environments and for ever. This would mean that it would be impossible to carry out any type of experiment that could lead to the subsequent qualitative development of nuclear weapons; that is to say, a ban on carrying out subcritical experiments or any other tests whose results might be doubtful or not verifiable. Giving shape to these objectives in the treaty would respond not only to the wishes of the international community but would have a very beneficial effect on the way in which the non-nuclear-weapon States see the nuclear Powers' relationship with their stockpiles. The foregoing would also be consistent with the thinking of the members of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (to which Cuba is not a party), which, on account of the importance that they attach to this instrument, decided to extend it indefinitely. However, it is clear to us that they are not happy that this extension should be only the legitimization for ever of the nuclear-weapon monopoly of five countries. We know that they demand more, that they demand the application of article VI of the Treaty by the nuclear Powers and the programme of action on nuclear disarmament included in the Principles and Objectives adopted at the NPT Review and Extension Conference.

It would also be consistent with the declaration made by the heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement in Cartagena de Indias, which, although it is true it has no significance for some non-member countries, it is also true that the majority of the international community, gathered together in that Movement, has long been advocating that the main priority - nuclear disarmament - should be placed on the negotiating table, as occurred with chemical and biological weapons. Cuba feels deeply and seriously committed to the Final Declaration of Cartagena and endorses each and every one of the principles set out in it. As a reaffirmation of what has been stated, we subscribe to the statement made by the Group of 21 in the plenary of the Conference on 23 January.

None of this is new in this room. Therefore we request that an ad hoc committee should be established as soon as possible to negotiate a concrete programme of nuclear disarmament to be carried out in a specific time-frame. There are many proposals as a basis for this that could be consolidated and constitute a platform which would enable us to take the first steps. It is argued that the task of nuclear disarmament is the prerogative of the nuclear-weapon Powers. How can one deny the interest and the right of the entire international community to participate in a process that is designed to eradicate the danger and threat to all peoples that is posed by the existence of weapons which could obliterate life from the face of our planet? What do they fear, the States which do not want to negotiate nuclear disarmament? Who are the enemies, now that the East-West conflict has disappeared? Why are the same military doctrines maintained? Perhaps it is planned to resolve the serious problems facing the international community today with nuclear weapons? Is it not known in this room that every day in Africa, Asia and Latin America large numbers of children are dying for lack of medicines and basic foodstuffs that could be provided using a minute part of what is currently being spent on military equipment by some countries? Let us think about this and let us dedicate the colossal resources that are now being funnelled to the arms race to more noble ends.

(Mr. Caballero, Cuba)

Taking up again this subject of negotiations on the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, we also wish to express our views on certain highly sensitive aspects for which urgent solutions are required. This is the case for scope. This article is basic and it will set forth what will be the essence of the treaty. We think that, whatever the wording may be - because we are flexible on this - it is here that the prohibition of all tests that could entail the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons or the creation of new generations of such weapons should take shape. Among the ideas that have been put forward against this approach is that of the inability of the system to detect or verify given types of tests. We are not trying to verify what is impossible. However, this is a political instrument that can not limit its ambitions to what is technically possible as that would mean erring on the side of excessive pragmatism. There are moral obligations which exist and have always existed and would be highly relevant on this occasion when we cannot have the ideal verification system.

As the seat of the organization we have already expressed our support for the city of Vienna, as well as the contractual relations that the organization should have with the International Atomic Energy Agency. However, we welcome all the other facilities that that city could offer to improve the living and working conditions of the organization and the officials who will be connected with it.

The verification system must be cost-effective. The States parties must defray the costs of the activities of the organization, including verification, in keeping with the United Nations scale of contributions, adjusted to take account of the difference in the membership of the United Nations and the comprehensive-nuclear-test-ban treaty organization. An improved mechanism based on the four technologies that have been put forward should provide a sound basis for subsequent technical evaluation of the nature of the phenomena that are detected. The introduction of national technical means could jeopardize the universal character of the treaty since, as is well known, only some countries have the advanced technical means that the CTBT will require and these means are under exclusive national control. Moreover, by using information other than that provided by the international monitoring system we would be legitimizing the use of information from national intelligence sources. Therefore we think that verification should be based solely on the data obtained through the international monitoring system.

On-site inspections will be a rare occurrence and will be accompanied by a process of consultation and clarification of doubts with regard to any event that might prompt suspicion about a possible failure to comply with the treaty. In any event their functions must always be compatible with the activity that is the object of the ban, and - this is extremely important - must avoid any type of possibility of being used as a political instrument against other States.

The Executive Council is very important, as regards both its membership and its functions, in guaranteeing the effective functioning of the treaty. We seek a balanced council with functions that would not imply discrimination for any of the States parties. In its membership no State member of the organization should be excluded, nor should there be the possibility of a

(Mr. Caballero, Cuba)

veto. We do not think either that there should be permanent seats by virtue of any criterion, namely, a nuclear capability, financial contribution to the organization or the number of international monitoring system stations on a country's territory. The only criteria that we accept for belonging to the Executive Council are being a member of the organization and performing the obligations entered into under the treaty. The number of members and the regional breakdown is a useful criterion that we are prepared to analyse on the basis of existing experience.

The Conference of States Parties will be the most representative organ of the organization, and it will have to take decisions with regard to a situation of particular gravity. We do not think that the authority of this body should be undermined in order to submit a given situation for a decision to the United Nations Security Council, whose members include the five nuclear-weapon States themselves, which, moreover, are those that have the greatest capabilities for carrying out a nuclear test. What measure would be taken if one of them were to violate the basic provisions of the treaty and its case were brought before the Security Council? The answer is clear: nothing. With no more than the veto of the country concerned, all the efforts, recommendations and concerns of all the States parties would be dashed. The subject, in the particular case of this treaty, should be analysed very carefully and in a pragmatic way. We cannot make 180° turns which at the end of the road will put us exactly where we started without any results whatsoever, but after having spent considerable energy and resources.

In the most recent plenaries we have witnessed the efforts made by two delegations in order to find solutions to the difficulties in the text that we are using as a basis. My delegation wishes to welcome these efforts and assure the distinguished delegations of Iran and Australia, the leading figures in this praise, that both texts have been very useful to us, not only to reaffirm the will to make progress which drives us, but also to understand better certain aspects that, by their nature, in the present draft, lead to confusion and misunderstanding. My capital, at this moment, is studying both texts, as a result of which we cannot yet put forward any substantive opinions, except to transmit, on their behalf, appreciation for the hard work that has been done and the desire to contribute that has been displayed.

The Conference on Disarmament has an agenda that was adopted in 1978 and it features various issues on which my country would like to see progress made. However, I think that we will have time in future to express our opinions, which, indeed, have long been well known to all. Moreover, we have informed the Special Coordinator who has been appointed to hold consultations on this of our preliminary views, together with a constant willingness to contribute to the discharge of his functions. We wish to focus our efforts on the conclusion of the CTBT, as we reflected through our positive vote on the resolution recently adopted by the General Assembly, and finalize the negotiations this year. For this we made the appeal at the beginning of our statement, for flexibility, which would enable us to have, at the fifty-first session, a text that could be put to the international community for approval. A balanced text that - to use the fashionable simile in this Conference - like

a huge mirror reflects all of us, not as we would like to be, but as we are: possessed of juridical and sovereign equality, as the United Nations Charter recognizes.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Cuba for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Berdennikov.

Mr. BERDENNIKOV (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): Mr. President, I am especially pleased to see you serving as President of the Conference on Disarmament. I consider that the Conference was fortunate that at such an important moment it was your turn to take up this position. We know that you are an experienced diplomat and that you have worked in the Conference for many years, on more than one posting. It is also pleasant for us that the work of the Conference is being guided by a representative of the Netherlands, a country with which Russia has had ties of sympathy and respect dating back to the times of Peter the Great. We understand what a heavy burden has been placed on your shoulders this month, when you have to guide not only the work of the NTB Committee, but also that of the Conference as a whole, and you can fully count on cooperation from the Russian delegation to do all it can to lighten your burden and to move forward under your guidance to tangible results.

I would also like to congratulate the distinguished Ambassador of Algeria, Ambassador H. Meghlaoui, on his designation to the post of Special Coordinator on the question of the future CD agenda, and the distinguished Ambassador of Egypt, Ambassador M. Zahran, on his appointment to the post of Chairman of Working Group 2 of the NTB Ad Hoc Committee, and also to thank all our colleagues who congratulated me on my appointment as Chairman of the Committee's Working Group 1. I will of course do all I can to ensure success in the work of the Group. I cannot fail to note that we greatly appreciate the effective support that the Conference enjoys from its Secretary-General, V.F. Petrovsky, his deputy, A. Bensmail, and also their colleagues in the United Nations Secretariat. Finally, I would like to address words of welcome to the Ambassadors of Cuba, Kenya and Nigeria who have recently arrived at the CD, and with whom the Russian delegation will take pleasure in cooperating.

I am also pleased to welcome the representatives of the international non-governmental organizations who are present in this room. We greatly appreciate the attention they pay to our work and we agree with many of the ideas contained in the message addressed to the Conference which was read out today. I take this opportunity to congratulate all women on International Women's Day, which is to be celebrated tomorrow.

In recent years profound changes have occurred in the international arena. At the global level, the "cold war" was overcome through combined efforts. As the President of Russia noted in his message to the Federal Assembly on 23 February 1996, there is no real military threat for Russia for the first time in the twentieth century. Today, the most powerful nuclear weapons are not targeted on Russian cities, or indeed on cities in the United States, Great Britain and other countries. Russia and the United States are carrying out unprecedentedly deep cuts in their strategic

armaments. It has been possible to consolidate strategic stability, and to ensure the indefinite and unconditional extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. However, we cannot but see the problems which have arisen in international politics since the end of the "cold war". I have in mind not only the accumulation of regional and local conflicts or the spread of terrorism, but also the possibility of dangerous geopolitical changes, first of all those related to the planned advance of the military structure of NATO towards Russian frontiers. We view the drawing of a new dividing line in Europe as lacking in any rational sense and it cannot be seen as anything other than dangerous provocation directed against Russia's security interests, a recrudescence of thinking in "cold war" terms. There is broad political consensus on this subject in our country. The plans for expanding NATO are poisoning the whole international climate, and arms control is no exception here. Moreover, we cannot avoid being disturbed at the fact that in the United States voices are being raised with respect to denunciation of the ABM Treaty and the creation of an ABM system on the territory of the country despite the prohibition in the Treaty. If that were to happen, this would have extremely negative consequences for the disarmament process. The maintenance of strategic stability in the world might be called into question, and this we feel is inadmissible for the national security of all States without exception.

Russia attaches great importance to the adoption in May 1995 of the historic decision on the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons without any conditions whatsoever. Our position is clear and definite: the indefinite extension of the NPT is not some sort of licence for the perpetual ownership of nuclear weapons for anyone at all. The President of Russia, speaking at the forty-ninth session of the United Nations General Assembly, put forward a proposal for the beginning of negotiations among the five nuclear Powers with the aim of drawing up a treaty on nuclear security and strategic stability, which would make it possible to deal comprehensively with the problems in this area, including those related to the further elimination of nuclear munitions and a reduction of their delivery vehicles.

The Russian delegation is in favour of the problem of nuclear disarmament being included also on the Conference on Disarmament's agenda as a separate item, from which it is high time to remove the reference to the task of cessation of the nuclear arms race as an already accomplished task. There is a need for joint efforts to devise proposals on the contribution which the CD might make to resolving this global problem. As for the organizational framework for such work, here we are ready to show flexibility.

Russia has been consistently in favour of the full and comprehensive prohibition of nuclear tests, considering that the time has come to take this important step towards preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and their qualitative development. This position was set down by the President of Russia in the United Nations back in 1992. Since the proclamation of its independence, Russia has not conducted a single nuclear explosion, and has firmly adhered to the moratorium it proclaimed. To a great extent thanks to our persistent efforts, it finally became possible in 1994 to get down to practical negotiations to draw up a treaty on this matter. From the very

beginning of the negotiations, Russia made an official proposal to extend the prohibition contained in the 1963 Moscow Treaty on any nuclear-weapon test explosions and any other nuclear explosions to the underground medium as well, thus making the ban on nuclear tests general and complete. And here we have always considered and continue to consider that the treaty being drawn up must be universal and have no time-limit, must be non-discriminatory and must not contain any threshold limitations. Unfortunately, this position did not immediately enjoy support from the other parties to the negotiations. However, little by little, thanks to well-directed work, the positions on these key issues in the treaty were successfully brought closer together. As a result, there are now solid grounds for the completion of work on the CTBT before the end of 1996, which Russia has always advocated.

At the same time it is clear that a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, as a powerful factor in the limitation of nuclear weapons, will not of itself lead to their complete elimination. On the road towards a nuclear-weapon-free world, much remains to be done. In this connection, we cannot but draw attention to the attempts of some participants in the CTBT negotiations to link this treaty to a certain time-frame and schedule for the reduction and ultimate elimination of nuclear arsenals. Such a linkage, given the existing political situation, can only make work on the treaty substantially more difficult.

The international monitoring system (IMS) must be an important component of the CTBT. To date, an enormous amount of work has been accomplished on the treaty, at both the expert and the political levels. The results of this work are encouraging. We are close to a decision which will lead to the creation of an effective, economical and non-discriminatory IMS. To a great extent, this is a result of compromises which have been found on many IMS elements. Russia has made its own contribution to achieving these compromises. However, any possibilities for compromise have their limits. For Russia, one such limit is the question of ensuring equal terms for monitoring existing nuclear test sites, their identical transparency for the IMS. As we stated at the very beginning of negotiations in the CD plenary on 1 February 1994, "of course, the non-discrimination principle should also apply to the verification machinery that will be provided for in the treaty". In this connection, the Russian delegation is firmly in favour of ensuring equal conditions for monitoring the existing nuclear test sites by improving the seismological and radionuclide subsystems of the IMS. If the Russian proposal is adopted, then the problem of equal transparency at test sites can be rapidly resolved. However, I would like to underscore very clearly that we can and must resolve this issue in the context of the IMS itself, and not using so-called confidence-building measures, including the exchange of data which might be provided by national stations on a voluntary basis.

The Russian delegation is satisfied at the results of the work which has been carried out recently on the international data centre (IDC). We see the IDC as one of the vital elements in the international monitoring system for the CTBT. We feel that the products and services of the IDC should not only meet the needs of the CTBT organization but, to no lesser an extent, should be in keeping with the national interests and capabilities of all States parties to the treaty. Russia's position on on-site inspection (OSI) issues is

(Mr. Berdennikov, Russian Federation)

well-known. We have noted that the basic elements of the Russian approach to OSI are shared by many other participants in the negotiations. The Russian delegation considers that OSI is an important component part of the international regime for monitoring compliance with the CTBT. At the same time OSI should be used only as an exceptional measure when all other means of clarifying the situation related to a possible violation of the CTBT have been exhausted. OSI should not be turned into a routine, frequently repeated means of clarifying just any concerns, including those which are not backed up by sufficiently convincing grounds. A series of key elements for the triggering and execution of on-site inspections contained in the Russian approach are designed to effectively prevent possible cases of abuse. We consider in particular that an OSI should be based either on data from the international monitoring system or on data from the IMS and national technical means. It will be possible to take a final position on this issue when the parameters, operational principles and effectiveness of the IMS become fully clear. However, when we speak of the possible use of national monitoring facilities, we are of course thinking about those which are used in accordance with universally recognized principles of international law. Another important element of the OSI regime which will help to avoid abuse and, at the same time, will ensure that OSIs are sufficiently effective, should be the "green light" procedure for adopting a decision to trigger an OSI. We are convinced that any automaticity in triggering an inspection, especially with the use of the so-called simplified first phase procedure, could lead to the unjustifiably frequent routine use of OSIs, in particular with respect to those countries which experience large numbers of seismic events that are unrelated to nuclear explosions.

We note with satisfaction the growth in support for the Russian proposal on the treaty provisions for entry into force of the CTBT, namely, the proviso regarding ratification by all States which possess nuclear power or nuclear research reactors as enumerated in the relevant IAEA list. We consider that this formula will make it possible to guarantee the legitimate security interests of all States both globally and regionally, and it corresponds to the purposes which we have set ourselves in the treaty from the very outset, namely, promoting the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and putting an end to their qualitative development. In this context, we are not refusing to consider other proposals on how to resolve this question. However, it must be recognized that all attempts which have been made up to the present to reduce the number of instruments of ratification which will be necessary for the entry into force of the treaty as compared with what we have proposed, have proved not to be viable.

We are not sure that the alleged problem which some people have been over-emphasizing about the treaty being held hostage to the question of the conditions of entry into force for the CTBT is not artificial. In any event, if this problem does exist, it will have to be resolved by political methods and not by including in the treaty provisions which are detrimental to its universality and effectiveness. As for the formula involving simply a set number of States needed for the treaty to enter into force, without any reference to countries or categories of country whose participation in the treaty would be mandatory, it might lead to a situation where the treaty would enter into force without States of crucial importance for its effectiveness.

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This apparently attractive decision is in fact pointless, since even today there are more than 170 countries which have obligations under the NPT and certain regional agreements which forbid them to conduct nuclear tests.

Another question which is important for the effective functioning of the CTBT is the satisfactory solution of the question of the composition of the Executive Council within the future organization. This body has to be representative both from the point of view of geographical allocation of seats and from the point of view of participation in its work by key States. It seems to us that a mutually acceptable solution to this problem can be found by the de facto granting of permanent or continuous membership of the Executive Council to those States which meet certain objective criteria which would need to be agreed on. Here we feel it important to use the example of IAEA.

The delegation of Russia is in favour of a requirement of 12 months' advance notice for withdrawal from the CTBT. In our opinion, it is necessary to create conditions which would make it as difficult as possible for any country to withdraw from the CTBT, because such a withdrawal might in turn provoke a chain reaction and thus the breakdown of the treaty. A reasonable period of notice - for example - 12 months, will in our view make it possible to take the necessary measures to clarify and correct the situation which had led a State to decide to withdraw from the CTBT. If such a withdrawal does nevertheless occur, other countries will have more time in order to assess the situation which has arisen and take the necessary steps to defend their national security. Considerable time may also be needed in order to plug the gap in the IMS which might be created if stations located on the territory of a State withdrawing from the treaty are withdrawn from the system.

In conclusion I would like to return to the question of the expansion of the membership of the CD. The decision which was adopted by the Conference at the end of last year's session has unfortunately not yet brought us any closer to a settlement of this problem which is so important for the CD. Furthermore, no movement at all is visible in this direction, although it would seem clear to all that the present composition of the Conference on Disarmament no longer corresponds to the current political situation. The situation which has developed around this issue is prejudicial to the authority of the Conference in its capacity as a multilateral negotiating forum, and may adversely affect the negotiations now under way in the CD. We call upon all delegations to do all they can to arrange a way out of this difficult position as quickly as possible. We would in particular like to appeal to the American delegation once again to weigh up all the pros and cons of the special position which that delegation has adopted with regard to the expansion of the membership of the CD and finally move towards the positions of all the other countries which take part in the work of the Conference.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm that we continue to believe that the question of Slovakia's agreement with the Czech Republic to occupy the place earlier occupied by Czechoslovakia is not a matter related to the expansion of the membership of the Conference, and that it should be resolved separately and without any linkages or delays. Justice should be rendered to Slovakia.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil, Ambassador Saboia.

Mr. SABOIA (Brazil): Before I read my prepared statement, allow me to join other speakers in expressing the appreciation of the Brazilian delegation for the important message that was addressed today by a number of international NGOs on the occasion of the celebration of International Women's Day. I wish also to extend our congratulations to all the women participating in the work of the CD for their important contribution to the work of this Conference. The sentiments of the Brazilian delegation with regard to this important date have been fully expressed in the statement made by the Coordinator of the Group of 21, Ambassador Meghlaoui of Algeria.

I briefly take the floor today to announce that on 27 February 1996 the Brazilian Congress decided to approve the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling, and use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC), signed 13 January 1993 in Paris. The Brazilian Government will shortly deposit the relevant instrument of ratification with the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The CWC is the first treaty in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction which is at the same time universal, comprehensive, non-discriminatory and verifiable. Brazil participated actively in its negotiation and considers it a useful model to be followed in efforts to effectively ban other classes of weapons of mass destruction, such as strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention, and engaging in negotiations - which we hope will commence soon - for the prohibition and complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Brazil for his statement. That concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? I recognize the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ambassador Nasseri.

Mr. NASSERI (Islamic Republic of Iran): I am taking the floor very briefly to add my voice to the words of gratitude expressed towards the NGO community and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom for their presence here today and for the very valuable and significant statement that they presented to this Conference, as read by our Secretary-General, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky. Indeed, the NGOs represent, in a sense, the conscience of the international community in disarmament but they have also, on a continuous basis, and I should also say in a very persuasive way, contributed to our work by making various studies in different fields of disarmament and producing publications; they are usually very deep and resourceful. In a number of areas we have been able to refer to them as a very useful source of information and analysis.

I simply wonder, then, whether it is appropriate for us to enjoy the contribution of the NGOs on very rare occasions - once a year, as has been the case. And, is it perhaps not the time to re-examine the possibility of enhancing their participation in the work of the Conference on Disarmament? Of course, this is not a new issue; it has been examined in the past, but probably we have not been able to come to a conclusion at certain stages. But the international situation continues to evolve and maybe for that reason the

(Mr. Nasseri, Brazil)

atmosphere and situation in the Conference evolves in a positive way. After all, at this stage, we are reviewing the membership of the Conference; we are reviewing the agenda; and we are even considering - at least it has been suggested that we consider - the possibility of revising the rules of procedure. Therefore, I venture to suggest to you, Mr. President, if you find it appropriate, to examine the possibility of renewing consultations on enhancing participation by the NGOs in the work of the Conference.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Iran for his statement and I would like to come back to his suggestion.

Are there any other delegations wishing to take the floor at this stage?

If that is not the case, I would like, briefly, to return to the suggestion that was just made by the distinguished Ambassador of Iran to reconsider the issue of participation of NGOs, closer association of NGOs, in the work of the Conference on Disarmament. The question is, indeed, under active consideration. Actually, the question came up yesterday in the weekly Presidential consultations, and has been referred to groups through their representatives. I am sure that Ambassador Nasseri will be informed through the Coordinator of his group of the results of our consultations.

If there is no other delegation wishing to speak, I should like to draw your attention to the fact that the secretariat has circulated, at my request, a tentative timetable of meetings for next week. This timetable is, as usual, merely indicative and subject to change if necessary. On this understanding, may I assume that the timetable is acceptable?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I should like to remind you that, in accordance with the timetable of meetings for this week, this plenary meeting will be followed immediately by a meeting of the Friend of the Chair on On-site Inspections of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on 14 March 1996 at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.